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Developing intercultural tolerance competence in pre-service english language teachers: a methodological approach

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Annotation. *This article presents a methodology for developing intercultural tolerance competence in pre-service English language teachers. Drawing on a two-group quasi-experiment (n=416) conducted at three pedagogical higher education institutions (Kokand, Navoiy, and Chirchik), the study demonstrates the effectiveness of four instructional techniques - 'Past-Present-Future', 'One Problem, Three Solutions', 'Circle of Tolerance', and 'Spectrum of Tolerance' - embedded within an Intercultural Communication course. Experimental-group participants showed significantly greater gains in tolerance competence than control-group participants, confirmed through Pearson's chi-square analysis.*

Keywords: *intercultural tolerance, pedagogical competence, pre-service English teacher, quasi-experiment, interactive methodology, intercultural communication.*

Развитие межкультурной толерантной компетенции у будущих учителей английского языка: методический подход

Аннотация. *В статье представлена методика развития межкультурной толерантной компетенции у будущих учителей английского языка. На основе результатов двухгруппового квазиэксперимента (n=416), проведённого в трёх педагогических вузах (Коканд, Навои, Чирчик), показана эффективность приёмов "Прошлое-Настоящее-Будущее", "Одна проблема и три решения", "Круг толерантности" и "Спектр толерантности". В экспериментальных группах уровень толерантной компетенции вырос значительно больше, чем в контрольных.*

Ключевые слова: *межкультурная толерантность, педагогическая компетенция, будущий учитель английского языка, квазиэксперимент, интерактивная методика, межкультурная коммуникация.*

Bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchilarida madaniyatlararo tolerantlik kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish: metodik yondashuv

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchilarida madaniyatlararo tolerantlik kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish metodikasi taqdim etiladi. Uch pedagogika oliy ta'lim muassasasida (Qo'qon, Navoiy va Chirchiq) o'tkazilgan ikki guruhli kvazi-eksperiment (n=416) natijalari asosida "O'tmish-Bugun-Kelajak", "Bitta muammo va uchta yechim", "Tolerantlik doirasi" va "Tolerantlik spektri" texnikalarining samaradorligi ko'rsatib berilgan. Eksperimental guruhlarda tolerantlik kompetensiyasi darajasi nazorat guruhlariga nisbatan sezilarli o'sdi.

Kalit so'zlar: madaniyatlararo tolerantlik, pedagogik kompetensiya, bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchisi, kvazi-eksperiment, interfaol metodika, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya.

INTRODUCTION

The globalisation of education and the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of the modern classroom have placed intercultural tolerance at the centre of teacher competence frameworks worldwide. For English language teachers in particular, whose subject matter is inseparable from the cultures it carries, the ability to recognise, respect, and mediate difference is no longer a supplementary virtue but a core professional skill. In Uzbekistan, this need is underscored by ongoing reforms to higher pedagogical education, which call for teacher-training curricula that cultivate not only linguistic and methodological competence but also the values-based, socio-humanistic qualities future teachers will need in increasingly diverse classrooms. Despite this recognition, the methodology of developing intercultural tolerance competence among prospective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers remains underdeveloped in the region. Existing intercultural-communication courses in teacher-training programmes tend to treat tolerance as an implicit by-product of cultural knowledge rather than as a competence to be deliberately built, practised, and measured. This gap motivates the present study, which asks: can a structured set of classroom techniques, embedded within an existing Intercultural Communication course, produce a measurable increase in pre-service English teachers' intercultural tolerance competence?

The purpose of this article is to present and empirically evaluate a methodological approach to developing intercultural tolerance competence in pre-service English language teachers. The study pursued the following tasks: (1) to substantiate the structural and content components of intercultural tolerance competence as a professional quality of the EFL teacher; (2) to design a set of interactive techniques capable of developing this competence within existing curricular time; (3) to test the approach experimentally across several institutions; and (4) to determine, statistically, whether the observed gains are attributable to the intervention rather than to chance.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical foundation of the study rests on the understanding of tolerance not as passive tolerance of difference but as an active, dispositional competence with cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. The cognitive component concerns knowledge of one's own and other cultures and the ability to recognise ethnocentric bias; the affective component concerns empathy and openness toward culturally different others; and the behavioural component concerns the capacity to act constructively - to communicate, negotiate, and resolve conflict - across cultural difference. This three-part structure aligns broadly with established models of intercultural communicative competence in language-teacher education, which likewise treat attitudes, knowledge, and skills as interdependent

rather than as separate outcomes. This distinguishes teacher tolerance competence from general intercultural competence and justifies treating it as an object of dedicated methodological development within teacher-training curricula, rather than assuming it will transfer automatically from a general intercultural-communication course.

Methodologically, the study employed a two-group quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design. The sample comprised 416 undergraduate students enrolled in the Preschool and Primary Education with a Foreign Language (English) programme at three state pedagogical institutions: Kokand State Pedagogical Institute, Navoiy State Pedagogical Institute, and Chirchik State Pedagogical University. Participants were divided into experimental (n=208) and control (n=208) groups, balanced across the three institutions. Control groups followed the standard Intercultural Communication course curriculum. Experimental groups followed the same curriculum but with four dedicated tolerance-development techniques integrated into course sessions:

- Past-Present-Future, in which students trace how their own attitudes toward a specific cultural group have changed over time, making the constructed and revisable nature of prejudice explicit;

- One Problem, Three Solutions, in which small groups generate multiple culturally distinct responses to a single intercultural conflict scenario, discouraging single-answer thinking;

- Circle of Tolerance, a structured discussion format in which students take turns articulating and then defending a viewpoint other than their own on a culturally sensitive issue;

- Spectrum of Tolerance, a self- and peer-assessment tool in which students place themselves and reflect on their position along a continuum from avoidance to active acceptance of difference, repeated before and after the intervention.

Achievement levels (low, medium, high) were determined before and after the intervention using a diagnostic instrument assessing the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components described above. Pre- and post-intervention distributions in the experimental and control groups were compared using Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2) at each institution and for the combined sample, with significance assessed at the conventional threshold.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the pre-test stage, chi-square comparisons showed no statistically significant difference between experimental and control groups at any of the three institutions, confirming that the groups were comparable at the outset. Following the intervention, the picture changed substantially. Across the three institutions, the proportion of experimental-group students reaching the high level of intercultural tolerance competence increased by 11 to 19 percentage points relative to their own pre-test baseline, compared with markedly smaller gains in the control groups over the same period. For the combined sample across all three institutions, the net gain attributable to the experimental methodology was approximately 14 percentage points, and the post-test chi-square values were significant at each site, indicating that the shift in achievement-level distribution was unlikely to be due to chance. These results support the central hypothesis: intercultural tolerance competence in pre-service English teachers is not simply a by-product of general intercultural exposure but responds to deliberate, technique-based instruction. Several patterns in the data are worth highlighting. First, the gains were consistent in direction across all three institutions despite differences in local student composition, suggesting the techniques are robust to institutional context rather than dependent on a single setting. Second, the largest movement occurred in the low-to-medium band rather than at the ceiling, indicating that the techniques were most effective at moving students out of avoidance or indifference rather than at converting already-tolerant students into highly tolerant ones - a pattern consistent with the techniques'

design, which targets habitual, unexamined responses to difference rather than reinforcing existing openness.

Third, the four techniques appear to address distinct components of the competence rather than duplicating one another. 'Past-Present-Future' and Spectrum of Tolerance worked primarily on the cognitive and self-reflective dimension, prompting students to notice their own attitudes as changeable rather than fixed. 'Circle of Tolerance', which requires students to argue a position they do not hold, worked on the affective dimension by demanding perspective-taking under structured conditions. One Problem, Three Solutions' worked on the behavioural dimension by rehearsing the practical skill of generating culturally varied responses rather than a single correct one. This alignment between technique and competence component offers a plausible explanation for why the combined set outperformed the standard curriculum, which addressed intercultural content without a comparable behavioural-rehearsal element. The findings should be read with appropriate caution. Longer-term follow-up would also be needed to determine whether the measured gains persist once students enter actual classroom practice. These limitations point toward directions for further research rather than undermining the core finding: that structured, technique-based instruction produces a statistically significant and practically meaningful increase in pre-service English teachers intercultural tolerance competence relative to standard instruction alone.

CONCLUSION

The study set out to determine whether a structured methodological approach could produce a measurable increase in intercultural tolerance competence among pre-service English language teachers. The evidence from a two-group quasi-experiment involving 416 students across three pedagogical institutions supports an affirmative answer: embedding four targeted techniques - Past-Present-Future, One Problem, Three Solutions, Circle of Tolerance, and Spectrum of Tolerance - within an existing Intercultural Communication course produced statistically significant gains (11-19% per institution; approximately 14% combined) relative to standard instruction. These results carry practical implications for teacher-training curricula in Uzbekistan and comparable contexts. Rather than requiring additional course hours, the approach demonstrates that existing intercultural-communication coursework can be made substantially more effective through deliberate technique selection targeting the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of tolerance competence separately.

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